

Agency/Component: **Social Security Administration**

2010 Hiring Reform Action Plan

Hiring Reform Initiative #1:

Eliminate any requirement that applicants respond to essay-style questions when first applying for federal employment.

Date:

Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed:

Applicants view the application process as too complex and are often discouraged from applying for government positions.

Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?):

Vacancy announcements for some positions required applicants to provide narrative responses to KSA questions. Applicants do not want to invest unnecessary time in developing essay-style responses to questions during the initial application stage.

The SSA SWAT Team used the 5-Why analysis to identify potential barriers to the agency's hiring process.

Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks:

Increase the applicant satisfaction rate; decrease the time it takes to apply for a position

Primary Action Planning Team

Lead: Nancy Peters

Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane

Action Steps

Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Eliminate KSA essays as a requirement during the initial application stage	Discontinue the use of assessment tools that require narrative statements during the initial application stage	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A
	Use resumes and job-related assessment tools to evaluate applicants	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A

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Hiring Reform Initiative #2: Allow individuals to apply for Federal employment by submitting resumes and cover letters or completing simple, plain language applications supported by valid, reliable assessment tools.				Date: 	
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: None - Applicants are only required to submit a resume and respond to a plain language, job-related questionnaire when applying for SSA positions.					
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): N/A					
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Reduce vacancy announcements to five pages or less; increase the applicant satisfaction rate					
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Nancy Peters Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane					
Action Steps					
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed	
Develop streamlined vacancy announcements	Develop streamlined agency templates for mission-critical positions	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A	
	Replace government jargon with plain language	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A	
	Update agency policy to mandate the use of streamlined templates	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A	

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Hiring Reform Initiative #3: Use category rating rather than the “rule of three” for competitive service hiring.	Date:			
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: Hiring managers are not always able to select the most highly qualified candidate(s); the top three individuals are not always the best-suited candidates for the job.				
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): Under the traditional “rule of three” evaluation method, hiring managers are only able to select from among the three highest-scoring applicants. The SSA SWAT Team used the 5-Why analysis to identify potential barriers to the agency’s hiring process.				
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Implement the use of category rating agency-wide; by 11/1/10, all external competitive service vacancies are announced under category rating procedures.				
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Nancy Peters Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane Secondary Team: Regional Human Resources Directors in the Servicing Personnel Offices				
Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Implement category rating procedures	Develop and issue guidance on using category rating procedures	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A
Use category rating for all competitive service hiring	Issue agency communications on implementing the use of category rating and eliminating “the rule of three” for competitive service hiring	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A
	Category rating is used for all competitive service hiring	11/01/10 - Ongoing	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A

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Hiring Reform Initiative #4: Ensure that managers and supervisors with responsibility for hiring are more fully involved in the hiring process, including planning current and future workforce requirements, identifying the skills required for the job, and being actively engaged in the recruitment and interviewing process (when interviews occur). Beginning with the October 1, 2010, performance cycle, hold hiring officials accountable for recruiting and hiring highly qualified employees and supporting their successful transition into Federal service in order to advance greater achievement of agency missions.				Date: 	
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: Ensuring that managers are fully engaged in the hiring process.					
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): We believe that SSA's hiring managers are, for the most part, fully engaged in the hiring process. However, not all managers understand the importance of the Managers' Satisfaction Survey and, therefore, do not take time to complete it. The fact that many managers do not complete the survey may give the appearance that hiring managers are not fully engaged in the hiring process. The SSA SWAT Team used the 5-Why analysis to identify potential barriers to the agency's hiring process.					
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Information on hiring practices and resources is shared with and understood by managers; a 5 percent increase in the number of managers completing the Managers' Satisfaction Survey; 90 percent of hiring officials receive a successful rating (or higher) in their performance plans on the performance element encompassing recruiting and hiring highly qualified employees; an increase in managers' participation throughout the recruitment/hiring cycle.					
Primary Action Planning Team Leads: Nancy Peters, Fred Glueckstein Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane					
Action Steps					
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed	

Engage managers in the hiring process	Communicate the value of completing OPM's Managers' Satisfaction Survey	11/01/10- Ongoing	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A
	Provide the results of OPM's Managers' Satisfaction Survey to hiring managers	11/1/10- Ongoing	DCHR/OPE	N/A
	Introduce a new standard into hiring officials' performance plans, effective October 1, 2010, to hold managers accountable for recruiting and hiring highly qualified employees and supporting their successful transition into Federal service	10/01/10 - Ongoing	DCHR/OPE	N/A
Update the Managers' Lifeline Website	Update information on training, hiring resources and hiring reform	07/22/10 - Ongoing	DCHR/OPE	N/A
	Market the Managers' Lifeline website to raise awareness of available hiring resources and information	07/22/10 - Ongoing	DCHR/OPE	N/A
Update the National Recruitment Guide	Update the National Recruitment Guide to ensure that all legislative and regulatory changes are captured	08/09/10 - 11/1/10	DCHR	N/A
	Make the National Recruitment Guide available to all Human Resources Specialists and hiring officials	08/09/10 - 11/1/10	DCHR	N/A
	Issue communications to market the National Recruitment Guide	08/09/10 - 11/1/10	DCHR	N/A

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Hiring Reform Initiative #5: Improve the quality and speed of agency hiring.	Date:			
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: Administering the written Administrative Careers with America (ACWA) examination is time consuming.				
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): Hiring managers view the written ACWA examination as a more effective tool to evaluate candidates for mission-critical occupations than the faster, online version of the ACWA. However, the extensive coordination required with the written examination between the agency, OPM, applicants, and testing facilities extends the time it takes to complete the hiring process.				
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Continue to maintain the agency's average hiring time that is below the recommended 80-day standard; maintain efficiency in hiring processes and practices				
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Nancy Peters Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane, Regional Human Resources Directors in the Servicing Personnel Offices				
Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Reduce the overall time it takes to hire a new employee	Identify barriers to streamline the hiring process	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A
	Work with OPM to convert the written ACWA examination into an electronic format	10/02/09 – 09/30/11	DCHR/OPE; OPM	N/A
	Implement measures for tracking progress toward meeting the 80-day hiring standard established by the End-to-End Hiring Model	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A

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Hiring Reform Initiative #6: Notify individuals applying for Federal employment about the status of their application at key stages in the application process.				Date: 	
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: None – SSA routinely sends applicant notifications at the key stages of the application process as a part of our normal hiring practices.					
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): N/A					
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Success: 100 percent of our applicants are notified at the key stages in the application process, as appropriate; Desired Outcome: Increase the applicant satisfaction rate					
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Nancy Peters Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane, Regional Human Resources Directors in the Servicing Personnel Offices					
Action Steps					
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed	
Implement four applicant status notifications through USAJobs	Conduct timely audits of returned certificates	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A	
	Issue status notifications at the four key points in the application process	Completed	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A	

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Hiring Reform Initiative #7: Provide training for every agency hiring official on effective, efficient, and timely ways to recruit and hire well-qualified individuals.	Date:			
Describe the barrier, problem, or deficiency being addressed: New managers and experienced managers require additional information and training/retraining on the hiring process; some new Human Resources Specialists are not always well-versed on hiring practices and authorities.				
Describe what is causing the barrier/problem (i.e., What is the root cause?): New managers and even some experienced managers hire infrequently and lack basic knowledge of the rules and regulations associated with the various hiring authorities/options. The SSA SWAT Team used the 5-Why analysis to identify potential barriers to the agency's hiring process.				
Define success or the desired outcome upon completion of applied tasks: Success: Managers have been provided with training on Hiring Reform initiatives, including their responsibilities in improving the hiring process. Desired Outcome: Increased management engagement in the hiring process leading to a more improved and efficient human resources operation, and an increase in the management satisfaction rate.				
Primary Action Planning Team Lead: Nancy Peters Members: Tom Daniel, Shannon McGlotten, Joyce Moody, Megan Millane, Regional Human Resources Directors in the Servicing Personnel Offices				
Action Steps				
Actions to be Taken	Key Deliverables/Output	Start Date/ End Date	Responsible Party (Parties)	Budget, Resources, and Approvals Needed
Develop training curriculum for Human Resources Specialists	Develop a list of core and refresher training courses for Human Resources Specialists and ensure completion as appropriate.	Ongoing	DCHR/OPE; SPOs	N/A
Provide training to managers on hiring	Conduct formal classroom training on Hiring Reform	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A
	Develop Interactive Video Training (IVT) and Video-On-Demand (VOD) on Hiring Reform for all hiring managers, Human Resources Specialists, and administrative staff, to include the provisions of category	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A

	rating			
	Issue communications to market the availability of IVT and VOD	Completed	DCHR/OPE	N/A